



Manifesto

Leading, representing, connecting and supporting Victorian volunteering

Level 2/491 King Street
West Melbourne VIC 3003
www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au
Ph 03 8327 8500
Fax 03 8327 8599
ABN 79 378 017 212
Volunteering Victoria is endorsed as a
Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR)

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From the CEO

As the state peak body for volunteering, Volunteering Victoria has a singular and specialised focus on volunteering. We see our role as leading the development of a collaborative, sustainable, thriving volunteering community and movement in Victoria.

It is worth taking a moment, especially for those of us who work within the movement, to reflect on why we do what we do.

In a nutshell, it's because volunteering plays a critical role in empowering individuals, in fostering active citizenship and in building inclusive and resilient communities in which we can all flourish.

We know that volunteering has many benefits for individuals who volunteer, the organisations to which they contribute and society as a whole. Volunteering:

- Supports individuals' empowerment, by providing them with an influential role in the community
- Provides a skilled and ready workforce to support the valuable work of not-for-profit organisations
- Ensures the ongoing delivery of a range of important services in our community
- Improves volunteers' health, wellbeing and emotional resilience
- Helps build a sense of satisfaction, pride, purpose and accomplishment
- Provides a positive impact on the lives of others
- Helps develop new skills, and expands volunteers' life and work experience, especially when formal work and education opportunities might be limited
- Helps build social networks, connectedness and community resilience.

The many positive outcomes of volunteering mean that volunteering truly:

- Is social inclusion in action
- Is community development one person at a time
- Has the power to transform lives
- Has the power to transform communities.

The definition of the term 'manifesto' neatly encapsulates what this document is intended to do: it is our public declaration of intent, policy and aims.

The first section of this Manifesto briefly describes Volunteering Victoria and this Manifesto's purpose.

The second section describes the volunteering landscape in Victoria, including the policy context, the regulatory environment and the key facts, statistics and economic impacts of volunteering. But I want to emphasise that, while the economic facts and stats are important and serve their purpose, *we live in a community, not an economy.*

The numbers undersell the value of volunteering – one hour of a volunteer’s time has a far greater value and impact than the cost of paying for that time, whatever value you choose to notionally give to that time.

In the third section, this Manifesto articulates what Volunteering Victoria sees as the current gaps in the social, economic and political structures required to support and grow volunteering in our community into the future. It identifies the eight areas that Volunteering Victoria strongly considers should be the key priorities for us and all others involved in the volunteering movement. This Manifesto goes on to highlight what Volunteering Victoria is doing to address each of these priority areas.

We welcome your feedback on this Manifesto and look forward to working with you to make it come alive.



Sue Noble,
CEO
Volunteering Victoria

About Volunteering Victoria

Volunteering Victoria is the state peak body for volunteering. Our vision is for resilient communities and empowered and active citizens through volunteering.

Through our dynamic and transformative leadership, Volunteering Victoria works to promote and build a vibrant, prosperous and strong volunteering community that is inclusive, respected and sustainable. Supported by a dedicated and highly professional team of staff and volunteers, Volunteering Victoria is a collaborative, supportive and inclusive organisation that works in an innovative, flexible and proactive way. We pride ourselves on being transparent and accountable.

As the state peak body for volunteering with a singular and specialised focus on volunteering, Volunteering Victoria is well positioned to lead the development of a collaborative, inclusive, thriving volunteering community in Victoria.

Our membership

Volunteering Victoria is a member-based organisation. Our membership brings together the diverse people and organisations across many sectors that want to show their commitment to volunteering in our state. Our membership reflects the diversity of the broader not-for-profit sector. It encompasses:

- Very small organisations that are entirely volunteer run, and extremely large organisations with significant numbers of paid staff and volunteers
- Organisations from all sectors, including social services, sport & recreation, community development, religious, emergency services, legal, health, animal welfare, arts & culture, tourism, government, environment & wildlife, corporate, education & training, employment services, philanthropic ... the list goes on
- Organisations that are utilising volunteers in a myriad of different ways, including 'traditional', one-off, skilled, virtual, episodic and micro volunteers, and which embrace and support employee volunteering
- Individuals who volunteer, who manage volunteers or who simply have an interest in the volunteering sector.

The purpose of this Manifesto

This Manifesto is a statement of the key issues and areas that Volunteering Victoria believes need urgent focus and attention by us, as well as all others involved in the volunteering community. The Manifesto highlights the work that Volunteering Victoria is doing to lead thought and action in each priority area.

Volunteering in Victoria: The current landscape

'I have a simple but important proposition. And that is that 'volunteering', the act of giving without financial reward to a greater cause, is the single most important factor that drives successful communities within Australia and most likely beyond. Not only that but I also argue that the role and importance of volunteering is increasing as the 21st century advances.'

Bernard Salt

The extent and impact of volunteering: The evidence

Anecdotally we know that volunteering impacts all our lives and all aspects of our community.

Those working in the volunteering space know that, without volunteers:

- Many community support services will not be delivered
- Community sport will grind to a halt
- Many cultural institutions will close
- Our environment will degrade and wildlife will disappear
- We will be at greater risk from disasters and recovery will be slower
- There will be a breakdown in social connectedness, cohesion and resilience
- People will live less safe, less healthy, lonely, isolated and poorer lives.

These claims are not just our views: there is a range of evidence demonstrating the strong contribution that volunteering makes to our society, some of which is highlighted below.

Participation in volunteering

Australians have high levels of participation in volunteering. Research conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that in 2010, 36% of Australians aged 18 years and over participated in voluntary work.ⁱⁱ People aged 45 to 54 years reported the highest rate of volunteering. Overall, women working part-time had the highest rate of volunteering (49%).

The same study found that volunteering rates vary between different groups in the community. People living in outside capital cities are more likely to volunteer (41%) than those living in capital cities (34%). Within Melbourne, the City of Boroondara has the highest rate of organised volunteering (25.1%) and the City of Brimbank the lowest (9.8%).ⁱⁱⁱ Lower rates of volunteering were found among people who speak a language other than English at home, people with low education levels and those whose main source of income was a government pension, benefit or allowance.^{iv}

Areas of volunteering

Volunteers operate in many sectors from health to social services, from local government to education & training. In 2010, sport & physical recreation organisations attracted the largest number of volunteers in Australia (2.3 million or 14% of the adult population). Males were more likely to volunteer for sport & physical recreation organisations (55% or 1.2 million) than women (45% or 1 million).^v

After sport, the most common types of organisations for which Australians volunteer are community & welfare, religious groups and parenting, children & youth organisations.^{vi}

The economic value of volunteering in Victoria

Volunteering makes a significant economic contribution to Victoria. A report prepared for the Victorian Government estimated that volunteering contributed \$4.9 billion to the state economy in 2006 and found that time spent on volunteering in Victoria increased by 38% in the 15 years between 1992 and 2006.^{vii} Of that \$4.9 billion formal (or organised) volunteering, women contributed \$2.64 billion, men contributed \$2.25 billion, while regional Victorians contributed \$2,012 million compared to Melbournians' \$2,884 million. Sport & physical recreation remains the most popular area for volunteer investment, with volunteer work contributing \$1.281 billion to this sector in Victoria. This was followed by education & training (\$1.037 billion), community & welfare (\$723 million) and religious organisations (\$646 million).

The economic value of volunteering in Victoria by 2021 is projected to be between \$30.3 billion and \$42.1 billion, depending on the growth in volunteer participation.^{viii}

'It is crucial that we as a community acknowledge that volunteer time is a real donation that is as valuable as money. This is especially important when time is the only resource many individuals have to offer. By exploring ways of putting a value on volunteer work we help to make this sort of work more visible.'^{ix}

Ironmonger Report

Volunteering as community strengthening

A 2011 Victorian Government report found that volunteering plays a significant role in strengthening communities.^x The report highlights that volunteering is a formal form of civic participation that creates bridging networks in communities and can mediate the negative psychological effects of disadvantage. In addition, it found that volunteering connects people to career paths and labour markets that are better paid and more stable and builds collective efficacy by influencing civic norms, developing political and negotiation skills, as well as inspiring collective problem solving to improve community life.

The policy context

The Australian Government's *National volunteering strategy*, developed in consultation with the volunteering community, was released in late 2011. The strategy identifies and commits the Australian Government to action in six areas:

1. Respond to trends in volunteering
2. Harness technology
3. Better regulation and risk management
4. Strengthen management and training
5. Strengthen relationships and advocacy
6. Recognise and value volunteering.^{xi}

Volunteering Victoria has developed a joint work plan with Volunteering Australia and the other volunteering state peaks that focuses on priority actions to support the implementation of the *National volunteering strategy*.

The Victorian Government released the *Victorian emergency management reform white paper* in December 2012. The paper provides a 'road map' for emergency management reform in this state over the next ten years.

The white paper highlights the important role volunteers have to play in emergency situations. The white paper identifies two actions specifically related to volunteers.^{xii} Action 8 focuses on working with local government, volunteer organisations and agencies to develop strategies to manage spontaneous volunteers during emergencies and to review protections (including insurance) for volunteers engaged in emergency events. Action 19 commits the Victorian Government to develop strategies in relation to nine areas of volunteering to strengthen the capacity, capability and diversity of Victoria's volunteers.

Finally, it is also important to acknowledge a broader transformation across the human services system, which is highly dependent on the work of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations. Through Services Connect launched in December 2013, the Department of Human Services aims to provide a model of service delivery which is structured around clients and their individual needs.^{xiii} This model builds on the work of Professor Peter Shergold, whose report *Service sector reform: A roadmap for community and human services reform*, recommends a new spirit of collaboration between government, public service agencies, community sector organisations and private providers, and suggests that an increasing range of government services will be delivered by non-government organisations into the future.^{xiv} Professor Shergold's report has a strong emphasis on building the capacity of community service organisations and those working in them.

The regulatory environment

The increasing regulation of voluntary work is a significant challenge for the volunteering community. In general, volunteering organisations operate within three regulatory spheres:

1. Laws and regulations that are specific to a particular activity an organisation undertakes, for example, those relating to food handling
2. General laws and regulations that guide the management of an organisation and its people, such as governance, harassment & discrimination, health & safety, protection of minors, and privacy of information
3. Regulation of an organisational type, for example, incorporated associations.

The establishment of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and the commencement of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act (Vic) 2012* were the two major recent changes in the regulatory space for volunteering in Victoria. However, the regulatory environment is still in a state of flux, with the federal government announcing an intention to disband the ACNC.^{xv}

What needs to happen now: Priority areas

Volunteering Victoria, as the state peak body for volunteering, is intensely interested in the future of volunteering in this state. We are working within an increasingly complex and fast-paced environment where the nature and needs of both volunteers and volunteer involving organisations are changing rapidly. All those in the volunteering community need to adapt to keep pace with these changes.

In this section Volunteering Victoria outlines the key issues that will drive our action over the coming year. These are also areas that need focus and attention by the entire volunteering community. In each priority area we highlight the work Volunteering Victoria is doing in that sphere. However, we recognise that addressing these priority areas will involve a collaborative effort, with all parts of the volunteering community working closely with government, academics and business, to share knowledge, innovation and best practice.

Volunteering Victoria considers all of the eight priority areas identified in this Manifesto to be of equal importance.

This Manifesto reflects Volunteering Victoria's thinking as we look ahead to 2014. We recognise that our priorities may need to change during the course of the year to reflect new challenges and concerns that may emerge for the volunteering sector and it is Volunteering Victoria's intention to review this Manifesto on an annual basis.

Spontaneous emergency volunteering

Victoria is a state prone to bushfire, flood and other emergencies. Yet there are currently no state-wide systems in place to register, communicate with and deploy spontaneous emergency volunteers.

Many Victorians are willing to put their hands up to help out in times of emergency. However, the lack of any comprehensive systems means that our current response fails to maximise the enormous goodwill of the Victorian community.

Volunteering Victoria firmly believes it is essential that we have robust systems and processes in place for optimal management and utilisation of spontaneous volunteers. A lack of coordination can significantly burden or complicate efforts for organisations responsible for emergency response, relief and recovery. In addition, by not fully utilising volunteers, we are failing to provide a rewarding experience for individuals who are willing to offer their time and energies to help out.

Finally, not fully harnessing spontaneous emergency volunteers means that we miss an important opportunity to build on the social capital in our communities and may jeopardise wider efforts to build community resilience.

In 2012 Volunteering Victoria developed a business case for an improved solution to supporting citizens, groups and organisations who wish to volunteer following an emergency. Our proposed model has a strong emphasis on community empowerment. However, to date the Victorian Government has failed to provide funding support for the implementation of Volunteering Victoria's state-wide spontaneous emergency volunteering model.

To support, promote and ensure spontaneous emergency volunteering, Volunteering Victoria will:

- Work to implement an improved solution to supporting citizens, groups and organisations who wish to volunteer following an emergency in Victoria, either with funding support from the Victorian Government, or from an alternative source.

Volunteer management

Volunteer managers are the people who are responsible for the volunteer program in an organisation. These personnel are central to the success of volunteering as they work to design and implement strong volunteering programs, and help develop an effective and resilient volunteer workforce. Some of these people are paid staff, while others are volunteers themselves. Volunteering Victoria considers it essential that the vital role of volunteer manager is supported and promoted, and that volunteering organisations recognise their value.

While volunteer management needs to be supported and improved across all sectors, Volunteering Victoria has identified sport as a sector with particularly high need. Sport & physical recreation organisations attract the largest number of volunteers in Australia.^{xvi} At present, those responsible for managing volunteers in sport & recreation organisations receive very limited recognition and support. Volunteering Victoria considers that building the capacity of volunteer managers in sport & recreation organisations is essential to ensuring that community sport continues to flourish in Victoria.

To support, promote and ensure the recognition of volunteer managers, Volunteering Victoria will:

- Establish and support the ongoing operation of the Volunteer Management Special Interest Group to support the interests, activities and advancement of volunteer managers and volunteer management
- Work with and through the Volunteer Management Special Interest Group to:
 - Advocate for the rights and interests of volunteer managers
 - Advocate for the professionalisation of volunteer managers through the provision of training and professional development activities, continuous improvement initiatives and accreditation programs
 - Identify current and emerging trends relevant to volunteer managers
 - Provide communication channels to facilitate the exchange of ideas, information and resources
- Promote increased recognition of volunteer managers within their organisations and across the community through direct engagement with key leaders, as well as broader consultation and promotion
- Lobby government at all levels to appropriately recognise and support volunteer managers in budget and policy development processes
- Work with members and other volunteering peak bodies throughout Australia to review the *National standards for involving volunteers in not-for-profit organisations*.

‘A thriving system will require strong demand for volunteers from volunteer-delivered services and a strong supply of mobilised and capable volunteers. The functioning of such a system is highly dependent on the role of intermediaries to ensure that there are sufficient appropriate volunteering opportunities and a well-developed volunteer ‘workforce’ that is nurtured through effective volunteer management. Intermediaries fulfil a vital brokerage role which can exploit appropriate media – both digital and non-digital - to connect and communicate with communities.’^{xvii}

Les Hems, Centre for Social Impact

Youth volunteering

Youth volunteers are the successors to the current dominant generation of volunteers in our community. If volunteer involving organisations do not engage and support young volunteers, they will struggle to deliver programs and services into the future.

There is evidence that young Victorians are highly engaged in volunteering.^{xviii} However, the evidence also suggests that young people have different motivations and expectations of volunteering, and are interested in volunteering in different ways, for example virtual or project-specific volunteering.

Volunteering Victoria believes it is critical that all those working in the volunteering sphere recognise the changing notions of volunteering and act to harness young people as volunteers.

Volunteering Victoria considers there needs to be an increased focus on building youth awareness of, engagement with and commitment to volunteering. We also need to assist volunteer involving organisations to understand the different motivations and expectations of young people. Finally, it is vital that we develop volunteering opportunities that are attractive to this cohort which can easily fit into their hectic and complex lives, for example project-based and virtual volunteering.

To support, promote and ensure volunteering by younger volunteers, Volunteering Victoria will:

- Work with peak youth volunteering organisations to share learnings with the broader volunteering community about what works with and engages youth volunteers
- Create forums and events to showcase the achievements and diversity of youth volunteering
- Develop tools to allow member organisations to assess their ability to embrace youth volunteers, and provide guidance on how to adapt to attract and retain youth volunteers
- Work with organisations and agencies which operate with volunteers to develop capacity and capability to create opportunities for youth volunteers, and to manage and retain them for long term sustainability.

‘On the supply side, volunteering by both women and men is very widespread across all ages, employment status and income levels. Given these factors, it seems probable that volunteering in Victoria, both indirectly through organisations and directly from one household to another will be maintained at something like current levels.

However, the attitudes of Victorians, the social relationships between households and the ways in which the thousands of volunteer organisations in Victoria grow, develop and operate, will determine what happens to volunteering in Victoria.^{xix}

Ironmonger Report

Multicultural volunteering

The available data suggests that multicultural Victorians have lower rates of volunteering than other segments of the community. But we know this is not the true picture of volunteering in these communities, which are often highly engaged and supportive communities.

Volunteering Victoria sees volunteering as ‘active citizenship’ and believes that increasing volunteering by members of the multicultural community can facilitate social inclusion, and also enhance service delivery to this community.

Volunteering Victoria has identified refugees, asylum seekers and newly arrived migrants as priority groups. Asylum seekers and refugees unable to obtain paid work want to participate in their community through volunteering. They want to volunteer for a number of reasons including improving English skills, gaining an understanding of Australian workplaces, making friends, and improving their health and general wellbeing. Volunteering creates a pathway connecting asylum seekers and refugees to the community and to others.

To support, promote and ensure volunteering in Victoria’s multicultural community, Volunteering Victoria will:

- Establish and support the ongoing operation of the Multicultural Volunteering Special Interest Group to support the inclusion of multicultural Victorians into volunteerism
- Work with and through the Multicultural Volunteering Special Interest Group to:
 - Advocate for socially inclusive volunteering for multicultural Victorians
 - Identify current and emerging trends relevant to multicultural volunteering
 - Develop programs, projects and plans that both engage and support multicultural volunteers and build the capacity and capability of volunteer involving organisations to engage multicultural volunteers
 - Provide communication channels to facilitate the exchange of ideas, information and resources
- Work with volunteer involving organisations to develop capacity and capability to create opportunities for multicultural volunteers, including how to manage them and develop their talents
- Work with government at all levels to support volunteering by members of the multicultural community, particularly asylum seekers and newly arrived migrants, to enhance their social and economic integration.

‘Volunteers deliver support and services at minimal cost to those in need and as such are integral to the smooth operation of today’s community. But there is another benefit to volunteering. This is the notion that volunteering not only delivers a service and a socially beneficial outcome but it also binds the individual volunteers into the community.’^{xx}

Bernard Salt

Employee volunteering

Australian businesses are increasingly recognising the benefits of volunteering and providing volunteer opportunities for their staff. Customers and investors are demanding that businesses be more accountable and transparent, often requiring evidence of corporate

social responsibility. At the same time, employees are seeking more meaningful engagement with the community. Finally, in an increasingly competitive employment market, management is looking for innovative ways to recruit, retain, motivate and develop personnel. Employee volunteering programs provide businesses with an opportunity to address all three of these objectives.

Volunteer involving organisations can also significantly benefit from employee volunteering programs. These programs provide ready access to a significant workforce for projects requiring increased in capacity at a particular point in time, or for projects requiring specialised skills.

Volunteering Victoria believes that there is significant potential for volunteer involving organisations and businesses to work collaboratively to provide more employee volunteering opportunities.

To support, promote and ensure employee volunteering, Volunteering Victoria will:

- Review and revitalise Volunteering Victoria's employee volunteering program, including providing corporates with support and advice to ensure they get the best possible results from their employee volunteer programs and assisting volunteer involving organisations to set up and deliver employee volunteer opportunities that provide maximum benefits for the volunteer involving organisation
- Actively promote the benefits of employee volunteering to both corporate and volunteer involving organisation members
- Engage with key stakeholders and develop opportunities to facilitate discussion about issues, challenges and key learnings in relation to employee volunteering.

Building volunteering networks

The development of stronger, more strategic collaborative networks and partnerships between and across government, the private sector, researchers, the not-for-profit sector, philanthropic bodies and the volunteering community will increase the capacity of volunteer involving organisations and volunteer managers to deliver better outcomes for the community and enhance the experiences of volunteers.

Building strong and collaborative relationships will mean that the volunteering community is well placed to overcome any new challenges that arise.

To support, promote and ensure strong volunteering networks, Volunteering Victoria will:

- Continue to work in partnership with the Victorian Volunteer Support Network (VVSN) to support volunteer involving organisations and volunteers, including continuing to be actively engaged with the network as a permanent member of the VVSN Executive

- Actively encourage connection and collaboration between and across organisations and individuals with an interest in volunteering
- Establish and support the ongoing operation of a range of special interest groups and working groups to encourage a collaborative approach to key issues and challenges facing the volunteering community
- Develop, facilitate and hold events, training, and seminars to support both increased collaboration around volunteering and to focus these efforts.

Promoting the benefits of volunteering

Volunteering has a range of economic and social benefits as outlined in the section ‘The extent and impact of volunteering: The evidence’ on page six. The benefits of volunteering are felt not just by individual volunteers, or the volunteer involving organisation through which they work, but accrue to our society as a whole.

Volunteering Victoria has recently launched a marketing campaign that seeks to recognise and promote the social impact of volunteering and highlight volunteering as a form of active citizenship. The *Imagine the Possibilities* campaign aims to grow volunteering across the community and expand perceptions about the diversity of people who volunteer and the variety of types, ways, places and reasons for volunteering.

To promote the benefits of volunteering in Victoria, Volunteering Victoria will:

- Develop and implement the *Imagine the Possibilities* campaign to promote the power of volunteering throughout Victoria
- Seek opportunities to work with government, business and volunteer involving organisations to further grow the *Imagine the Possibilities* campaign.

Measuring the impact of volunteering in Victoria

While the positive social and economic impact of volunteering in Victoria is beyond dispute, these benefits have not been comprehensively measured. Beyond the data sets highlighted in the section ‘The extent and impact of volunteering: The evidence’ on page six, the gathering of qualitative and quantitative data about volunteering in Victoria is inconsistent and sporadic.

Volunteering Victoria believes we need to improve the evidence base in relation to volunteering as a matter of urgency. Collecting the range of data that would help measure the impact of volunteering in Victoria requires collaboration and action on the part of all involved: from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, to university researchers, to volunteer managers who coordinate programs on the ground, and volunteers themselves.

To support, promote and ensure measurement of the impact of volunteering in Victoria, Volunteering Victoria will:

- Actively encourage connection and collaboration between research institutions and volunteering practitioners through our research roundtable series
- Lobby for the inclusion of consistent data collection through the Census process and Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Develop a proposed framework for the measurement of the impact of volunteers and volunteering that enables volunteer managers to measure the impact of their programs and better demonstrate the community and social impact of volunteering, not just the economic value
- Continue to advocate for a comprehensive report on the state of volunteering in Victoria that documents the health of and trends in volunteering in Victoria.

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